

Hartford Police Release ID of DOC Officer Involved In Shootout, Car Chase

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HARTFORD - Detectives are investigating a shootout and car chase that ran from Wethersfield Avenue and Wyllys Street through the South End until it ended with a crash near Cowles and Baldwin streets. No gunshot wounds were reported.

Three Hartford men were in custody early Friday after the incident: Carlos Collazo, Luis Lugo-Ortiz and Juan Ramos-Rivera.

The Department of Correction officer involved in the shootout has been identified as Angel Ortolaza, 41, a nine-year veteran. The DOC is conducting an internal investigation, DOC spokesman Andrius Banevicius said.

The incident began about 10:50 p.m. Thursday at Wethersfield and Wyllys when an off-duty correction officer stopped for a red light in his personal car, said Lt. Brian Foley, head of the Hartford police major crimes division. The suspects pulled up in a car next to the officer and the suspects allegedly engaged in an "aggressive" conversation with the officer and a woman in his car. Ortolaza's Honda was struck by several rounds, Foley said.

As the shots were fired, police were notified by the shot spotter system and several 911 calls, Foley said.

The shooters took off south on Wethersfield Avenue in a black Nissan Maxima with the correction officer in pursuit. At some point during the chase, which wound back and forth between Wethersfield and Franklin avenues, the suspects fired again, and the correction officer fired back at the black Maxima.

Police officers checked buildings where the incident began and elsewhere to make sure no one was hit by a stray round. "There was a lot of gunfire," Foley said.

As the chase headed south, Hartford officers in marked patrol cars took over the chase. It ended near 31 Cowles St. All three people in the Maxima were quickly captured.

Ammunition and shell casings were found in the Maxima, and police recovered the gun, Foley said.

Ortolaza is the brother of a Hartford police officer, and initially police thought the Hartford officer was the person involved.

He is assigned to the Hartford Correctional Center at 177 Weston St, Banevicius said. Ortolaza was hired by the DOC on Feb. 10, 2004.

Banevicius said he could not comment further. He said correction officers are not certified police officers and do not have the powers of arrest.

The three men in the car were formally charged early Friday. Lugo-Ortiz, 25, was charged with driving without a license, engaging police in pursuit and interfering with police; Ramos-Rivera, 25, was charged with interfering with police; and Collazo, 24, was charged with attempted first-degree assault, reckless endangerment, unlawful discharge of a firearm, carrying a pistol without a permit and criminal possession of a firearm.

Police said Ortiz has 21 arrests in Hartford for mostly narcotics and motor vehicle charges. Collazo has six arrests for crimes including carjacking and narcotics. Thursday night's incident was Ramos-Rivera's first arrest, police said.

Courant Staff Writer [Christine Dempsey](#) contributed to this story.

Note: A previous version of this story was based on initial reports from police that have been revised as police investigated further. Police initially said a suspect was bitten by a police dog and that the incident began with the officer observing the suspects engaged in illegal activity. The updated information from police indicated that a police dog did not bite a suspect and that the correction officer did not observe illegal activity.